/84 cont./

797 a case and despite the value of this aid, during the first days
• 122 all will seem to him /85/ confused and tangled, and in those strange cries, which break his eardrums, he will not make out sentences, words, nor even syllables. And nonetheless it is necessary to make a grammar! Days pass, the months, and years... and happily the time comes when the grammar is done. And that language which once seemed a heap of inarticulate cries, now appears with the parts of speech, with its system, its rules, its philosophy, and its beauty. The natives themselves, who speak it with surprising correctness, are incapable of saying how it was formed. This is another task which the missionary must carry out with ingenuity and reasoning."

797 185. It would seem that we missionaries and true indigenists must still fight hard in defense of the Indians in this and other matters and to refute what imperceptive writers say against the Indians, whom they only know by references or by a hasty glimpse, without a long stay among them nor daily, unhurried study.

000 First it is denied that the Indians have a well-formed language; at most they are conceded to have a tiny vocabulary without any logical grammar. And then, when they have been convinced of the falsity of these assertions, with the vain pretext of unitarianism (not to say totalitarianism), they want the native languages, whatever may be their intrinsic value, their literary productions, and the number of natives who speak them, to disappear by degrees or by force. The North Americans confess that they even went so far as to apply punishments to the children; but they confess their error and they are now on the way back while others still are going to bring punishment upon their own heads. There will come, God willing, a coexistence of Spanish with the native languages (since the Indians are neither rebellious nor incapable of learning our language); then there will come the disappearance of the latter

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Kamarakoto

EDITORIAL NOTE

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[122] The Revista de Fomento (official Review of the Ministerio de Fomento of the United States of Venezuela) takes pleasure in publishing the noteworthy work of Dr. George Gaylord Simpson entitled "The Kamarakoto Indians, Carib Tribe of Venezuelan Guiana," which it believes to be an important scientific contribution to the ethnology of the Venezuelan indigenous tribes in general and, more particularly, to that of the Venezuelan Carib tribes.

Dr. Simpson, a distinguished vertebrate paleontologist of The American Museum of Natural History of New York, was graduated from Yale University (Ph. B. 1923, Ph. D. 1926), where he made investigations on geology and vertebrate paleontology. He has also done scientific research under the auspices of the Peabody Museum of Natural History, the National Research Council, the International Education Board, the British Museum (Natural History) in London and, finally, for the American Museum of Natural History in New York where he has been an associate curator since 1929. He belongs to the following scientific societies: Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma Xi, American Society of Mammalogists, American Society of Naturalists, American Philosophical Society, Paleontological Society, Geological Society of America, and others. He is a corresponding member of the Zoological Society of London and of the Sociedad Argentina de Estudios Geograficos "Gaea," and an active member of the Explorers Club. He has taken part in many paleontological expeditions in the United States of America and in South America, as a staff member of the American Museum of Natural History, and has published more than two hundred scientific papers and books.

Dr. Simpson came to Venezuela in September 1938, together with his wife Dr. Anne Roe, by special invitation of the President through the Ministerio de Fomento and as representative of the American Museum of Natural History, in order to organize the collection, preparation, and scientific study of fossil mammals near Barquisimeto and elsewhere in Venezuela, following up the work begun by Brother Nectario Maria of La Salle Institute in Barquisimeto.

Dr. Simpson went to the region of San Miguel, near the Barquisimeto-Quibor highway, where he planned and carried out the work of collecting fossil mammal bones in the field revealed by Brother Nectario Maria's explorations.

[p. viii]

173 Any interpretation of this legend must be labeled conjecture and hardly
101 even scientific inference, let alone fact. Nevertheless, it could mean more
[131] or less this: That there was a tribe called Kamarakoto living somewhere north of the Cuyuní and east of the Caroní in colonial times; that some members of this tribe fled before the attacks of other Indians (cf. Ramón Bueno) or from the missionaries and other white invaders (the present Kamarakoto belief; the dislike of the Indians for the missionaries can also be read between the lines of Ramón Bueno) and settled down in or near Kamarata; that they were there absorbed into an Arekuna population already present or one that drifted in from the east, and that the resultant mixed tribe eventually became wholly Arekuna
[144] in speech, culture and physique. A weak point is that the "ancient Kamarakotos" must themselves have been physically identical with the Arekunas, because the Kamarakotos are so today and would hardly be if they were mixed with another tribe of different physical character.

173 More recent events are usually treated with equal vagueness. The most
192 definite is the memory of a great tribal war, more than two generations ago, between the Kamarakotos and surrounding tribes, particularly the Mwerwan, a tribe said to have lived on the Caroní and now to be extinct. A dispute over fishing rights between normally friendly tribes led to a general and bloody war. There has been no warfare within the last two generations.

173 The cacique, Alejo Calcaño, told me that a "bishop" (i.e. a priest or
197 missionary of some sort) visited this region some thirty years ago, in Alejo's life-time, distributed presents, but did not preach or teach, and forthwith disappeared never to be seen again. I have not been able to find any record of such a visit. Other Indians mention brief visits of missionaries (the same, or others?) which they place at anything from a generation to five years ago. The recently established missions of the Alto Caroní have not yet come in contact with the Kamarakotos.

Basis of This Study

101 The materials for the present study were gathered during several weeks'
114 residence in Kamarata, the valley south of Auyán-tepúi, early in 1939 with
122 the Comisión Exploradora de la Gran Sabana of the Ministerio de Fomento of the Venezuelan Government. I cannot too heartily thank all the officials concerned for their generosity and their splendid co-operation in making this work possible for me, and I wish particularly to mention the Minister of Fomento, Dr. Manuel Egaña, and my companions and the leaders of the expedition, members of the Servicio Técnico de Minería y Geología, Drs. Victor M.
114 Lopez, Santiago Aguerrevere, Carlos Delgado, and Carlos Freeman. Thanks to them and to the excellent equipment and organization of the expedition, I

114 had none of the usual executive tasks or camp work to do or to supervise and was able to devote all my waking hours to the study of the Indians. This had the effect of giving me about twice as much work time as would have been available under the usual circumstances of such expeditions and enabled me to do a great deal more than I could ordinarily have hoped to do in the few weeks available.

115 This study was also exceptionally favored by the employment of Antonio
124 Montesdeoca and his assignment to me as interpreter and general informant. He is a full-blooded member of the tribe and thoroughly acquainted with its language and with all its customs. He is also a man of importance in the tribe whose instructions and wishes were always fully carried out by the other Indians. At the same time, he has received some schooling in a Venezuelan town and so was able to convey all the desired information to me in comprehensible Spanish. He was very co-operative, intelligent, and quick-witted. Statements that appeared at all doubtful were not recorded on his authority alone and I took every opportunity to check them in all directions (never finding that he had willfully misled me) but he was my main informant and he spent many hours and days patiently showing and explaining to me everything possible. This was ideal assistance and it, too, made it possible to gather far more and better information than could have been hoped for.

126 A very considerable collection of almost all the portable objects in use in the tribe was also made and this was generously presented by the Ministry of Fomento to the American Museum of Natural History where I have been able to study it at leisure.

101 From Kamarata we were flown to Santa Elena by James Angel, whom I
114 also wish to thank, as well as the Linea Aeropostal which flew us in to Kama-
121 rata and out from Santa Elena. At the latter place we remained for about ten
122 days, the purpose being not a study of the Indians there, the Taurepanes, for their own sake but for comparison. As I have remarked, the Taurepanes are relatively well known scientifically and my brief observations were only for the purpose of permitting a first-hand comparison with the Kamarakotos, giving more reality to the literature for me, and supplying a few needed data still lacking in the literature. Here the hospitality and assistance of Dr. Fernández-Peña were of the greatest value and I wish also to thank the reverend fathers of the Capuchin mission for their friendly interest and whole-hearted co-operation.

122 The materials so gathered have been worked up at the American Museum
128 of Natural History in New York, and acknowledgments are due to that institution for the considerable amount of my time and for many facilities afforded for this work, which is outside the field of the work for which I am there regularly employed.

128 I am indebted to several persons for assistance with various details.
J. Martínez-Mendoza A., of Caracas, and Charles B. Hitchcock, of New York,

224 identification of these animals). These are the staple food animals, as nearly
262 as any can so be called. Capybaras, kapi:ba, armadillos, atsi:gamo, merun, and mauraima, and anteaters, waremg, are sometimes eaten but are not so
[261] specifically hunted. Monkeys, carnivores, sloths, opossums, and the small rodents are not regularly hunted or eaten except in times of food scarcity. Some allied Indians, even among the Arekunas, regularly eat monkeys but most of the Kamarakotos expressed distaste for monkey flesh.

In spite of the variety of food mammals available, it seems in fact to be relatively rare to obtain one and their meat, however much enjoyed when obtained, is not a staple. Few mammal bones are seen around the houses and the Indians do not claim to be able to procure such game regularly.[110]

223 Birds are more often procured, but still not regularly. They range from
262 the large okira and karmaiba down to the tiny kamata. The principal sorts eaten will be found in the Vocabulary.[†]

224 Among reptiles and amphibians only the tortoises and the larger lizards,
225 ayamaka, are ordinarily eaten, and these not often. ayamaka-eggs are an
262 eagerly sought delicacy when in season and the eggs of practically all the larger wild birds are also eaten. Most Indians eat crocodilians and the absence of these from the Kamarakoto diet is perhaps due rather to rarity and difficulty of capture than to distaste.

222 Among insects the large ant-like bachacos, kaiba', are eaten as are
262 some larvae found in palm trees, tsiya' and iwo. Other insects may be eaten in times of need but are not regular items of diet. Wild honey, tautsan-yeuku,
[231] is much prized but is not abundant enough to be a staple. I did not hear of any
[237] attempts to domesticate bees. Honey is also used for tattooing and beeswax for fastening blowguns together, coating quivers, etc.

Hunting.

224 Hunting, carried on only by men, is a favorite occupation but probably
[462] not a very productive one. One would anticipate that such Indians would be
[433] skillful hunters and certainly all the men engage in this and have abundant paraphernalia for it and many tales of their prowess, but as far as I could check
[12] the actual performance it is not impressive. For instance we employed successively two men who were agreed to be the best hunters in the tribe, arranged for them to have all their time for this, gave them whatever they wished in the way of ammunition, and offered extra prizes for any unusual success, but one of them did not succeed in getting any game and the other drew blank most days and in a week he got only one animal, an acure, that could be considered a
[262] success from the point of view of pot-hunting. I have already remarked on the
[411] evidence that animal food is more a treat than a regular item of diet. We were also unimpressed by such examples of marksmanship with their weapons or with ours, as we saw.

[110] [see footnote on pp. 319-20, category 116 - Analyst]
[†] [see vocabulary on pp. 59-61, category 116 - Analyst]

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Fig. 74 – Kamarakoto Women Buying Cloth at Expedition Headquarters.

101 101. These particular Arekunas have no tribal name. The Taurepanes, like the Kamarakotos, are also Arekunas but of a more or less definable tribal group within the Arekuna horde.

173 102. According to the legend of an Indian war perhaps 75 to 100 years
161 ago, the tribe was then decimated, but in the following generation or two increased until it was more numerous than now.

551 103. One small boy, with a Spanish name, revealed his Indian name to
114 a member of our party with whom he was on particularly close terms, but he immediately regretted it and denied that he had done so. As I did not myself hear the name I do not record it.

561 104. As a joke, names of members of our expedition were given to
177 several Indians who had not had Spanish names and these were accepted and used by the Indians themselves.

343 105. At a dance we attended, drinkers who had become unconscious
273 were stowed away in the work-house as long as the hammock-supply held out.

342 106. Most of the expedition's thatching was with Mauritia leaves, but
824 the Indians pointed out to me (quite correctly) that they did not bother to make
● 122 as good houses for us as for themselves. I also suspect that they were conserving the dwindling supply of easily available Oenocarpus leaves for their own use.

241 107. For convenience and in accord with English usage, I shall call the plant and its product casave (or cassava), but properly speaking the plant is "yuca" (which of course has nothing to do with the plant called "yucca" in
[262] North America) and only the prepared root is "casave." The Kamarakotos call the plant kosɛ̃ra, the root kõsɛ̃, and the prepared bread eke.

[114] 108. This is unusual among related tribes and we were not there in the
[462] planting season, but the Indians unequivocally informed us that planting is man's work.

[173] 109. As may be seen in Koch-Grünberg, the Taurepanes, at least, have
[177] legends which as a whole are pre-Columbian and in which bananas play a role, perhaps as intrusions — but perhaps because they really were known then?

237 110. In passing, I may mention that the Indians often stick the jawbone of an eaten animal into the sticks in the inside of the roof and leave it there.
[211] They maintain that this has no more significance than to remind them of a

171 escape the clear evidence that many Caribs did eat human flesh and hence, in
266 any acceptable definition of the word, were indeed cannibals. It is evident that this was seldom or never a regular item of diet but took place under definite, ritual circumstances, and it is probable that it was never a universal practice common to all the highly diverse Carib tribes. The question is academic here, since the Kamarakotos and their closer allies certainly never eat human flesh now and have no memory or legends of such a practice.

15 224. This and the contrary statement regarding the Indians are supported
114 by the expert opinion of my wife, Dr. Roe, who is a clinical psychologist.

155 225. It would not be proper to expand or to argue these statements here,
171 but it should be added as confirmatory evidence that among allied Indians who
158 have been in close contact with missionaries of various sects there are occasional clearly neurotic tendencies and cases.

364 226. We later saw Taurepanes, under much stronger "civilized" influence,
177 living in dirt such as would not be tolerated by a Kamarakoto.

● 122 227. Kamarakoto women did our washing during our stay and got it as
296 clean as a laundry would, although with some extra wear. That their own clothing was usually rather dirty may, indeed, have been due in some degree to their spending so much time on ours.

273 228. It seems, moreover, certain that the sexual excesses said to accom-
286 pany Indian drinking bouts among other tribes do not occur here.

202 229. The Kamarakotos use no means of signaling, by drums, fire, or
[101] otherwise. They told me, with evident admiration, that traveling parties of
[484] Arekunas (i.e. any of the Indians closely related to the Kamarakotos but not recognized as belonging to this tribe) communicate advance notice of their number, destination, and time of arrival by setting fires, but that they do not know this art. Travelers confirm the use of fire-signals among allied tribes, although the Kamarakotos may have exaggerated the extent and explicitness of such messages.

171 230. This practice of burning the sabanas is as common in northern
372 Venezuela as it is in Kamarata and is pursued even in Caracas, where it is a
341 source of much annoyance and some real loss and danger. Is it possible that this very unfortunate Venezuelan habit is another heritage from the Indians? In the cattle country it is rationalized by saying that it improves the pasturage (but Pittier has shown that the exact opposite is true) and reduces the number